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FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS STAFF

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SUBJECT The Woodward Book

SUSAN KIDD: We have more reaction to the Woodward book from a former CIA lawyer and a communications school dean.

Sanford Ungar is Dean of American University's Communications School. And John Greaney is Director of the Association of Former Intelligence Officers and was a CIA lawyer from 1951 until 1980. They're both with Joel to tell us how they see it.

JOEL SPIVAK: Smile, Mr. Greaney. It's all right.

Now there you just saw Mrs. Casey. And the idea here is no way could Bob Woodward have gotten into the hospital and talked to her husband. And everybody's talking about this today. Now what do you think?

JOHN GREANEY: I believe Mrs. Casey. I have great regard for Mrs. Casey. And I think when you take a lady -- and I emphasize the word "lady" -- of her stature and the things that she's been through and the hurts that she's had in her recent life, I think to call up the network and ask to make a statement demonstrates how deeply she feels about it. And I think she's accurately portrayed what happened, that Woodward did not get to see Mr. Casey.

SPIVAK: All right, let's ask the Dean here. What do you think?

SANFORD UNGAR: Joel, if Bob Woodward says he saw Mr. Casey, I believe he saw him. It's not -- this is a very uncomfortable situation to be in to speak against the widow of Mr. Casey so soon after his death....

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SPIVAK: Sure it is.

UNGAR: I'm sure that she is not aware if Bob Woodward saw Mr. Casey.

SPIVAK: Well, excuse me. But she said, or she was quoted in The Washington Post this morning as saying that somebody from the family was there 24 hours a day. Now Mr. Greaney was a lawyer for the CIA. So you know a little bit about how they operate, I presume. And I'm also presuming that there would be all kinds of people up there on the floor with Mr. Casey so it wouldn't have been easy to get to him. Isn't that true?

GREANEY: I think it is true what you say, Joe, because there were security people there for his protection, and also the fact that they did not want people disturbing him and going on. The circumstances were that Bob Woodward came in there under false pretenses, and only when confronted by the security people -- he wouldn't even identify his name -- they then finally got up an identification card, and it showed his name was Robert Woodward. So that he wasn't there openly and was not an invited guest. And I don't think he saw him.

UNGAR: Oh, I'm not suggesting he was there as an invited guest of the family or that he was there openly. But I believe that if he says he was there, I believe he was there, and I believe he communicated with Mr. Casey.

You know, it's often the case that people in intelligence agencies think that they can outsmart everyone else, that nobody could possibly breach the lines of security. But of course, that happens all the time.

SPIVAK: Well, now, you know, once again, I think you're right. I think we ought probably not to be arguing directly against Mrs. Casey....

UNGAR: No.

SPIVAK: But on the other hand, I mean how do you know for sure that he wasn't in there? He probably had some friends inside the agency who might have gotten him in there.

GREANEY: Well, I would go back to....

SPIVAK: Well, wait a minute, though. Here's Robert Woodward, whom Ben Bradlee called absolutely the best reporter he's ever seen. Now if Woodward did not see Casey, then the whole book falls apart. All these allegations about Mr. Casey operating off-the-shelter -- ha-ha, off-the-shelf operations with the Saudis and everything, that all can't be true if Woodward

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claims he went to see Mr. Casey in the hospital and he actually didn't.

GREANEY: Okay, go back to Ben Bradlee. When Robert Woodward was the editor of special interest stories and he was responsible for Janet Cook's flagrant violation of....

SPIVAK: He was responsible?

GREANEY: He was her editor.

UNGAR: He was her editor.

GREANEY: He was her editor.

SPIVAK: You mean he assigned Janet Cook....

GREANEY: He was responsible for the veracity of the story, and it was not true, and they had to return the prize....

SPIVAK: I defer to Dean Ungar on that. Is that guilt by association?

UNGAR: Well, it's guilt by association. Also, if we're going to get to that point, then we have to talk about all the times that the CIA has not told the truth to the American public....

GREANEY: Now wait a minute.

UNGAR: And so we can say that perhaps on this occasion it's not telling the truth....

GREANEY: Well, that's a totally different argument you're making. I'm talking about a fact that was portrayed in an interview of Bob Woodward's in the Washingtonian magazine that he was the editor responsible for the Janet Cook story.

SPIVAK: But Ronald Reagan took the responsibility for blowing up the Marine barracks in Beirut, too. But....

UNGAR: No one disputes that he was the editor responsible at that time, and those facts are well known. That does not mean that everything -- and first of all, Bob Woodward can speak for himself. We don't need to speak for him.

SPIVAK: I wish he would. I wish he'd come in here and speak for himself.

UNGAR: Well, that's up to you to determine.

SPIVAK: Yeah, I understand that.

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UNGAR: But the fact that something went amiss on his watch by another reporter does not mean that everything he's ever written is then called into question. That really is guilt by association, and I can't go along with that.

I would say that, as a general rule, if I have to take the word of the media or of the CIA on some matters of this sort, I'm more inclined to believe the media. I'm more inclined to believe the media than the government on most governmental affairs.

SPIVAK: Well, gentlemen, frankly I think this hospital thing is a tempest in a teapot, because there're some really major allegations that have been printed already; one of them being, and I touched on it before, Mr. Greaney, that Mr. Casey was running these off-the-shelf operations in contravention of the President's own executive order barring the CIA from being involved in assassinations.

GREANEY: Well, wait a minute. You're mixing apples and oranges, Joel, because the assassination story deals with the car bombing at Fadlallah's house in Beirut on March 8, 1985. And I stress the date. That was denied by the CIA. It was investigated by the House Permanent Subcommittee on Intelligence and reported to the full House by the then-Chairman, who was Congressman Lee Hamilton, who is now the Chairman of the House contra committee.

SPIVAK: Did the committee know, for instance, that Mr. Casey was meeting secretly with Prince Bandar, the Saudi Ambassador here in Washington?

GREANEY: The committee....

UNGAR: Did the CIA know that?

GREANEY: The committee was investigating the allegations that Woodward had written about on The Washington Post of May 12th.

SPIVAK: Yeah, but he said himself that that story was not complete when he wrote it. He didn't know anything about the allegations that Mr. Casey....

GREANEY: But bear in mind that the House Permanent Select Committee viewed it in depth, in detail, and they say in their report that they had reviewed all the witnesses that were necessary for this story.

SPIVAK: I want to get Dean Ungar in on that.

UNGAR: I'll amend my earlier statement only to say that

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I'm more inclined to believe the media and to believe a good investigative reporter and trust in his capacities on these matters than I am a congressional committee.

SPIVAK: Well, I don't know whether this marriage can be saved, and all this hubbub, and the book isn't even out yet, as far as I know. To be continued.

Back to you, Susan.